

Governance, Administration, and Planning



Introduction

The organization, governance, and funding of Virginia public libraries is delineated in the *Code of Virginia 42.1-33-45* and the *Virginia Administrative Code 17VAC 15-110-10*. The library administration and the library board, when the library has a board, provide leadership and vision for public library development and public library service based on accountability, sound management practices, and adequate funding.

Library Boards

The majority of library boards in Virginia are governing boards. A small number of libraries have advisory boards, or no library board. Depending on the local library's governance structure, the advisory board or local government may fulfill some of the duties attributed herein to governing boards. Libraries that have an advisory board, or no board, should assess the role of the advisory board or local government in fulfilling appropriate duties based on local ordinances and/or administrative procedures.

Standards

1. The governing library board provides access to tax-supported public library services to all residents of the service area.
2. The governing library board adopts by-laws, rules, and regulations for its own guidance and for the governance,

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maintenance, and function of the library system.

3. Policies approved by the governing library board are written and are available for public inspection.
4. The library has a written mission statement that clearly states the purpose of the public library in its service area. The library has a written long-range plan, developed within the last five years, that addresses collection development, technology, public services, and other areas as necessary. The plan states goals and objectives for improvement of library services and is available for public inspection.
5. A governing library board employs a qualified library director, provides for an annual evaluation of the director, and delegates active management of the library to the director. Board members must not be involved in the day-to-day operation of the library.
6. A governing library board sets and approves the library budget and has a written financial plan.
7. The library board holds meetings as specified in the bylaws, at a time and place convenient for the library board and the community, in accordance with Virginia state law on public meetings (*Code of Virginia 2.1-340*).
8. The library board complies with Virginia law and any federal laws that affect library operations.
9. The governing library board assures that adequate and accurate records and statistics on library operation are kept.

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Guidelines

- **Essential Guidelines for Governance**

The governing library board . . .

- Selects and appoints the library director, and evaluates the library director annually.
- Follows all provisions of Virginia's public meeting laws.
- Understands the services and programs offered by the library.
- Understands the role and responsibility of the Library of Virginia and the Library Development and Networking Division.
- Periodically reviews its bylaws.
- Adopts written policies for services, collection, personnel, and other operations necessary to the library (Policy Checklist, Appendix B).
- Adopts a written financial plan using data from community analysis, the library's planning document, and economic and political factors. The financial plan documents the library's fiscal

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strategy to maintain or improve services in any economic climate for a multi-year period.

- Seeks funds necessary to meet the goals of the planning process.
- Meets required minimum levels of local financial support.
- Seeks gifts, donations, grants, and other income in cooperation with the library administration.
- Reviews budget and planning document with funding officials annually for necessary action.
- Contracts for and reviews annual audits.
- Reviews monthly financial reports.

- **Aspiring Guidelines for Governance**

The governing library board . . .

- Budgets for board members' attendance at meetings.
- Budgets for board members' continuing education activities.
- Encourages and budgets for board participation in

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appropriate state organizations.

- Establishes endowment funds.
- Exceeds required minimum levels of local financial support.
- Discusses library services and how they are to be funded with funding officials, formally and informally, throughout the year.

- **Excel Guidelines for Governance**

The governing library board . . .

- Encourages and budgets for board participation in appropriate national organizations.
- Budgets for annual board development workshops.
- Provides reimbursement when board members represent the library in community and professional events and functions.
- Includes recommendations in the financial plan for securing funds necessary to accomplish goals in the planning documents.
- Sets aside funding to meet requirements for capital

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expenditures such as automation system upgrades, bookmobiles, delivery vehicles, computer hardware, copiers, etc.

- Establishes a formal planned-giving program.
- Exceeds statewide medians for required levels of local financial support.

- **Essential Guidelines for Administration**

The library administration . . .

- Assumes full responsibility for administering library policy, personnel selection and management, development and administration of programs and services, selection of materials, and compliance with the laws that govern library services.
- Coordinates communication between the library board and funding officials, and the library board and legislators.
- Understands the financial structure of the library.
- Provides an orientation session for new board members.
- Provides bylaws, annual reports, current budget, lists of officers and committee

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members, and other pertinent documents to board members and to the Library of Virginia as required.

- Keeps the community and funding officials aware of the library's purpose, planning, and services.
- Works with other agencies and organizations in the library's service area.
- Attends regional and state library meetings.
- Encourages staff participation in continuing education activities.
- Maintains effective communication with the library staff.
- Analyzes the effectiveness and efficiency of internal operations and programs.

- **Aspiring Guidelines for Administration**

The library administration . . .

- Provides a structured orientation for new staff.
- Provides orientation(s) on specific services in public libraries, such as youth services, to the library board.

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- Provides a climate that encourages the development of innovative programs and projects.
- Sponsors an annual staff development activity and other continuing education programs as needed.
- Seeks collaborative partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the library's service area.

- **Excel Guidelines for Administration**

The library administration . . .

- Provides a mentoring program that partners trained staff with new staff.
- Sponsors ongoing staff development and continuing education opportunities.
- Provides to the library board structured information sessions about library services, such as youth services, that cover state and national trends and models of excellence.
- Seeks collaborative partnerships with other agencies and organizations regionally, statewide, and nationally as appropriate.

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- **Essential Guidelines for Planning**

The governing library board, administration, and staff . . .

- Develop a mission statement for the library.
- Develop goals, objectives, and methods of evaluation.
- Develop a written document outlining the tasks necessary to carry out the goals, objectives, and evaluation.
- Provide the Library of Virginia with current copies of the library's long-range plan and other pertinent planning documents.
- Measure community use of the library, its materials, and services annually.
- Evaluate progress toward achievement of goals.
- Analyze specific services, such as reference and interlibrary loan, for accuracy and satisfaction to library users.

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- **Aspiring Guidelines for Planning**

The governing library board, administration, and staff . . .

- Involve the community in the planning process.
- Share the plan with community groups, funding officials, and library stakeholders.
- Prepare marketing strategies for developing services, programs, and collections for targeted groups.
- Conduct a general user survey every other year as part of the planning process.
- Survey services to specific groups, such as preschoolers, young adults, and seniors, as appropriate.
- Review services to library stakeholders, public officials, and staff.

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- **Excel Guidelines for Planning**

The governing library board, administration, and staff...

- Conduct a full, formal planning process every five years.
- Develop a vision statement as well as a mission statement.
- Conduct a community survey every five years to evaluate the library's impact on the community.
- Incorporate appropriate information from other agencies and institutions - local, regional, and state - into the planning process.

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